

is late, it is really a big inconvenience, because the Democrats knew that they had to pass the AMT patch some months ago and they didn't do it. And so what does that mean? It means not just a few people in the car pool. What it means is 32 million Americans will not get their tax refund; \$87 billion will be late to 32 million Americans because the Democrats are late in dealing with the AMT tax patch. They tried to put it together with a \$3.5 trillion tax increase, the mother of all tax increases. Of course that didn't work, and now we're late.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT WILL HELP US REDUCE OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, today we will consider legislation that invests in the future of our Nation and puts us on the path to energy independence. The Energy Independence and Security Act is a significant legislative package that will strengthen our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil. The bill addresses skyrocketing gas prices with increased fuel economy standards that will save American families 700 to \$1,000 a year at the pump. It also reduces oil consumption by 1.1 million gallons per day in 2020, one half of what we currently import from the Persian Gulf. And this legislation includes a historic commitment to American biofuels that will fuel our cars and trucks. This investment in hometown crops will create American jobs and protect the environment by reducing carbon emissions.

Madam Speaker, the Energy Independence and Security Act will help our Nation invest in resources in the Midwest to improve our environment, instead of relying on Mideastern countries for pollution-heavy fossil fuels.

I hope all my colleagues in the House and Senate will support this legislation and help reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

CONGRATULATING THE REDSKINS OF HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Anderson Redskins of Hamilton County, Ohio for winning the Division II Ohio School Athletic Association Football Championship. The Redskins capped off their incredible run into history Friday night by beating the Louisville Leopards of Stark County 31-25 in front of 11,065 fans at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium in Massillon.

After 19 years as assistant coach at Anderson, first-year head coach Jeff

Giesting led his team to a final record of 13-2, including a win in the playoffs against township rival the Turpin Spartans.

On Sunday, the Anderson township community celebrated the Redskins' first-ever State championship in their history where all 15 seniors took to the podium to talk about their incredible victory. The resounding theme among those players was not the championship trophy itself, but the sense of community, togetherness and pride which has spread throughout the area.

Madam Speaker, I salute the school, the players, Head Coach Giesting, and the entire Anderson township community on their championship season. Well done, Redskins.

THE BUSH-CHENEY ENERGY PLAN

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, the so-called Bush-Cheney energy plan was developed in secret, and it was developed in secret because it was disastrous for America. It would have been bad policy for the 1950s based on subsidies for the oil, coal and gas industry, dig, drill and burn, but it was a total embarrassment and disaster for 21st century policies. Today we have a chance to reverse that, to put in place a modest renewable portfolio, but the Republicans object to renewable portfolios; to put in place a mandate on increased fuel economy, which the American people would dearly love to have more efficient vehicles, but the Republicans object to that; and investment in new technologies and new sustainable fuels to take us to energy independence, to free us from the thrall of being subject to Chavez and the Saudis and others, but the Republicans object to that too. And we would pay for it by stripping the wildly profitable oil and gas industry of some tax subsidies from the American people, and the Republicans object to that too. But despite their objections, we are going to establish a new energy direction sustainable for this country.

FUND OUR VETERANS

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, this is day 66; that's 66 days so far that our veterans have not had the use of the increased funding for their benefits and health care. That's \$18.5 million a day not able to be used. This bill has been done for months and the President has already agreed to sign it. But instead of moving the bill forward, the Democratic leadership in Congress continues to postpone this bill. So far, only one of 12 appropriation bills have been passed and signed into law. Why? Our veterans are heroes. There are few things more important than ensuring

that this Congress provide all possible benefits and health care for our veterans.

I'm calling on the Speaker to move this bill forward. And I call on all Americans to contact their representatives and tell the Democratic leadership to send a clean veterans appropriation bill to the President now. Our veterans deserve it.

NO BLANK CHECK FOR THE WAR IN IRAQ WITHOUT INPUT FROM CONGRESS

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, while our troops continue to perform heroically in Iraq, President Bush's troop surge has not lived up to its promise of producing essential political reconciliation.

As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I helped lead the opposition to our involvement in Iraq in the first place because I felt that we should let the weapons inspectors do their jobs before rushing into a preemptive military strike.

After our Iraq policy failed, and the rationale for going to war was invalidated due to the absence of weapons of mass destruction, we're told that the so-called military surge would help bring about a political solution in Iraq. That has not happened. Senior military commanders have indicated that the inability of the Iraqi Government to achieve political reconciliation is a greater threat to our troops than the insurgency in Iraq.

Many of us here in Congress believe that the Iraqi Government will not begin to address the political reconciliation until it is clear that our troops are coming home.

Last month, House Democrats once again passed a bill that provided our troops with \$50 billion in funding and a strategic plan that brings them home. We must bring our troops home. We demand a change in the direction in Iraq.

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NEW ENERGY POLICY

(Mr. CONAWAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, the previous speaker mentioned that the current energy policy was crafted in the dark. I would have to agree that the current energy policy that's being proposed has certainly kept the Republicans in the dark because we have yet to see the language on the policy that we will be asked to vote on over the next couple of days. In all likelihood, it will require mandates. Mandates are good ideas that I've come up with that you have to pay for.

There will be a lot of talk on this floor, there will be a lot of good arguments made, but to cut to the chase, if